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All the brethren, fearing the lightning stroke from heaven, desisted from the occupation in which they were engaged, and prostrated themselves in prayer, and lo! in a short space two of the monks were deprived of their vital breath." The next year Divine displeasure was, equally displayed. A thunderbolt from heaven pierced the unjustly-purchased vestment, and it was filled with "wonderful holes made in it by the fiery force of the lightning." Hence, observes the chronicle piously, "we may see the marvellous power of God towards the saints." Of the abbots themselves the chronicle has little to say. One Abbot Ralph was a rare abbot. "Ever first at the choir, he was the last to quit it. Thus was he a pattern of good works—a Martha and a Mary. He was the serpent and the dove. He was a Noah amidst the waters: while he never willingly rejected the raven, he always gladly received the dove. In the sparingness of his food he was a Daniel—in the sufferings of his body a Job—in the bending of his knees a Bartholomew." Besides such holy men, Battle Abbey seems also to have had other treasures. It boasted a sword and a royal robe belonging to William the Conqueror, both of doubtful authenticity. Leland has preserved the catalogue of the library. A short extract will not make the present generation regret that its contents are not accessible to the reading public:—

The Gloss of Odo, Abbot of Battel, on the Psalter.  
Clement of Sautory on the Spiritual Wings and Feathers of the Cherubim.  
The Entire Chronicle of Jordan, Bishop of Ravenna.  
Mellitus on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.  
Bede on the Distances of Places mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.  
Bishop Martin on the Four Cardinal Virtues.  
Epistles of Ivo on the Body and Blood of Christ.  
Abbot Odo: Exposition of the First Book of Kings.  
Sermon of Stephen, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the Assumption.  
Sermons of Richard of Melksham.  
Sermons of Stephen of Canterbury.  
Broker William de la Lees' Book of Chronicles.  
The Responses of Albinus.  
Albinus on the Propriety of Sermons.  
Topography of England and Wales, by Sylvester Giraldus Cambrensis.  
The Entire Prophecy of Hildeyard.  
The Summary of Michael de Straulfield.

Truly a wretched library; not a single classic in it. The English monasteries must have degenerated. When Alcuin went to assist Charlemagne, he had his books from England. Certainly the learning of England had declined.

But we have yet to name what, in these modern times, is considered the most memorable thing in connexion with the abbey; that is, the far-famed Roll of Battle Abbey—a document which all who pride themselves on their Norman lineage refer to as indisputable authority. The roll is a list of the adventurers who came over with William the Conqueror. It is a list of which the English aristocracy are proud. He whose name is there boasts himself of pure blood. He whose name is there boasts with a feeling of pardonable exultation that his

is the honour of an ancient and unsullied line. It is questionable whether this is really the case. It is more than probable that the list has been tampered with, and that names which have no business there have been foisted in. Even if the list were genuine it would not be of so much consequence as some imagine. It is not birth alone that wins the world's homage now. The man we would honour must be better than his fellows—of nobler life, of loftier aim.

"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;  
The rest is all but leather and prunella."

The abbey was suppressed in Henry the Eighth's time, who granted it to Richard Gilmer, from whose hands it passed into the hands of Sir Anthony Brown. It is now the property of the Webster family. By means of its connexion with the Browns, the abbey has become associated with that unfortunate Earl of Surrey to whom we owe the introduction of the sonnet and blank verse. The second wife of Sir Anthony was the lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of Gerald, ninth earl of Kildare, whose beauty, under the name of the "Fair Geraldine," Surrey "married to immortal verse." The love that gilded his troubled life still lives and shines, for time

"Makes all but true love old."

Our readers will forgive us if we tell them, as the noble poet sang—

"From Tuscan came my lady's witty race,  
Fair Florence was some time their ancient seat.  
The western isle, whose pleasant shore does face  
Wild Cambria's cliffs, did give her lively heart.

Fostered she was with milk of Irish breasts,  
Her sire an earl, her dame of princes' blood;  
From tender years in Britain she doth rest,  
With king's child, where she tasteth costly food.

Hunsden did first present her to mine een,  
Bright is her hue and Geraldine she hight;  
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine,  
And Windsor, alas! doth chase me from her sight."

Thus Battle Abbey comes to us with no common claims. It has its tales of heroism—of bravery—of piety—of learning, and of love. We see it rising with prayer and praise amidst the slaughter of the battle-field. When the times came for mitred abbots and shaven monks to pass away, we see the old halls filled with the bravery and the beauty of that age. It is still to us a chronicle, and reads to us a sermon of change and decay. It does more. It shows how imperishable is human energy. The children of Rollo landed strangers on our shores. Here with their broad-swords and strong right arms they won themselves a home. They are gone, and the abbeys they built and endowed moulder away—but their spirit still lives; we see it in the energy which grapples with the elements and rules the waves, that has preserved freedom here when the powers of Europe have conspired her overthrow, that has carried the English tongue into every corner of the globe, and that has made the banner of Old England float victorious over every sea.

## THE COVENANTERS.

In "Old Mortality" Scott has represented or *mis*-represented the Covenanters. In other productions of his fertile genius he has alluded to them, and given, here and there, a sketchy indication of those terrible covenanting days, and of those who had imbibed the spirit of the times. Wandering Willie tells us, in a weird and fearful fashion, of the persecutors in hell; and in the "Bride of Lammermoor" we are introduced to Mr. Bide-the-Bent, who had been "out in the persecution." But in "Old Mortality"—the Marmion of his novels—the subject is brought more fully and broadly before us.

None other of Scott's novels produced so much controversy as this. While one class of critical readers pronounced the

"Old Mortality" Covenanters to be faithful portraits, others denounced them as gross caricatures, and Dr. Macrie took the field against the fiction-maker—ready to do battle for the reputation of the heroes and the martyrs who shed their blood for the Covenant. Scott himself, in describing the operations of that conflicting time, and the opposite principles brought forth in the struggle, attempted to give a faithful picture. He says: "If recollection of former injuries, extra loyalty, and contempt of their adversaries produced vigour and tyranny in the one party, it will hardly be denied, on the other hand, that if the zeal of God's house did not eat up the conventiclers, it devoured, at least, to imitate the phrase of Dryden, 'no small portion

of their loyalty, sober sense, and good breeding.' We may safely hope that the souls of the brave and sincere, on either side, have long looked down with surprise and pity upon the ill-appreciated motives which caused their mutual hatred and hostility while in the valley of darkness, blood, and tears." And the justice of this is apparent enough when we come fairly to consider the motives that directed and the emotions that aroused that terrible Scottish tragedy.

The covenant which the sixth James signed, while he was yet a boy—a saucy blockhead, as his tutor called him—included an abjuration of the Roman Catholic faith and an obligation to support the Protestant religion. Later in his life this same sagacious and pedantic king renewed the covenant at Edinburgh, giving thereby fresh impulse to the Presbyterian cause; but the old quarrel between the prince and the priests soon broke out again, and while matters were in the most unsatisfactory state imaginable, James quitted Scotland as England's king. The religion of Scotland had become the great question of the day. James attempted to reduce its institutions to uniformity with those of England, and the quarrel, bad enough before, now grew worse. Of all causes of quarrel under the sun none have been so prolific as religion. When James claimed the right to rule in matters ecclesiastical, and instituted penalties to compel obedience, every Scottish pulpit rang with invectives. When bishops came to rule the church, and had their way prepared by church officers, whom the sapient king called superintendents, the innovation was most loudly and positively denounced, and there were not wanting "Mucklewraths" to launch their thunders at the prelacy. "Dress them as bonnily as ye can," cried one, "bring them in as fairly as ye will, we see the horns of the mitre weel enough." All this squabbling rent unhappy Scotland till the wisest fool in Christendom slept his last sleep.

Scotland under Charles I. was even worse than Scotland under James VI. The devastation of the civil war was keenly felt there; the sword of persecution and the sword of rebellion were out of their scabbards. The Scots were not men to be trifled with. More than once they had lifted their swords against a crowned head. Like the Henrys of France, the Stuarts seemed a doomed family. James I. had been murdered in his bed-chamber; the nation had arrayed itself against James II.; the lifeless body of James III. had been left on the battle-field; the heart of James V. was broken; and Mary Stuart was imprisoned and deposed. What they had done before they could do again. But Charles pursued his own course of policy. The church quarrel was to be summarily ended; a liturgy—not that of the English prayer-book, but another—was to be read evermore. But at the first reading in St. Giles, Edinburgh, the wooden stool of Jenny Geddes hurled at the reader's head, betokened how the people liked it. The Edinburgh mob were fierce and cruel, and women in all directions headed risings against the liturgy, and in great crowds and with great enthusiasm the people met and signed the National Covenant. The parchment was spread on a flat tombstone in the Gray Friar's church. So many signed, that in many instances there was room only for initials, and these were here and there written in blood. This was in 1638.

The Covenanters were denounced and condemned, but they remonstrated and appealed; and then Charles and they marshalled their armies, and the fray began—a "bishop's war," they sometimes called it—a war of "liturgies and leaden bullets." The blue flag with its inscription in gold, "For Christ's crown and Covenant," floated over many a bloody field. The religious question was soon merged in that of politics—politics as plainly so as reform in parliament or an extension of the suffrage. Men sometimes do strange things in the name of religion. After the beheading of the first Charles, his son found a refuge with the Scots. They proclaimed him king, and the merry monarch became a Covenanter. At Dumferling, he appended his signature to a new declaration, renouncing "popery and prelacy," and asserting that he had no other enemies than those of the Covenant. Then came the reverse of fortune. The Presby-

terians of Scotland and the Puritans of England at warfare, moistened the earth with blood, and did it in the name of God: while the shout on the one side was "the Covenant! the Covenant!" Cromwell and his hosts replied, with deafening cries, "the Lord of Hosts! the Lord of Hosts!" The Scots were subdued, Charles had to seek a foreign home, and Cromwell declared in the spirit of the times—that it "was the great hand of the Lord, and worthy of the consideration of all those who take in their hands the instruments of a foolish shepherd, to wit, meddling with worldly politics and mixtures of earthly powers to set up that which they call the kingdom of Christ."

The restoration of Charles II. was the beginning of sorrow for Scotland. The Covenant might now be said to have completed its history. The upright minister of Crail—though withal given rather to sermon stealing—was their first messenger to the court, and as a simple presbyterian parson he came, but as a mitred prelate returned—the Rev. James Sharp became bishop of St. Andrew's, and with high triumph rode into Edinburgh. The burning of the Covenant by the hands of the hangman followed; then the old covenanting ministers were turned adrift. The depth of winter saw them homeless; for their old attachments were strong, and they refused to acknowledge the authority of newly-invested prelates. Four hundred congregations were thus deprived, but the deprivation was supposed to be made up by new teachers sent expressly to fill up vacant places. Then came those days of empty kirks and crowded hill-sides; the days when the episcopal teachers had none to listen, and the old pastors, in the green meadows and by the side of the still waters, preached to eager multitudes. To preach without a licence was sedition; pains and penalties fell on those who absented themselves from the parish church, but the preachers still preached, and the people still listened. Quietly at first they met, and in quietness separated; but the dragoons were soon called out to prevent the gatherings and compel obedience to the law. Heavy fines were exacted, severe punishments inflicted, fines to the amount of fifty thousand pounds were paid in Ayrshire, women were publicly whipped, boys were scourged and branded, and, by shiploads, Scottish slaves arrived at Barbadoes. To give a drink of water or a piece of bannock to an ejected minister was a capital offence.

Oppressed on every hand, the Scots turned on their oppressors. They met to hear the word of God, but had their swords by their sides in case of conflict. Encounters occurred. They fought, and fought boldly, singing old saintly psalms in the rugged metre of the Scottish psalter, and struggled like men who had ventured all and had no mercy to expect. These simple country folk, unknown

"Till persecution dragged them into light  
And chased them up to heaven,"

were slaughtered without pity or remorse. General Dalziel, fresh from butchering Turks and Tartars, who had learnt the art of war in Russia, was sent to hunt out contumacious Covenanters; and James Graham, of Claverhouse, came with his wild dragoons, and that brow-beating lawyer, the "bluidy Mackenzie." Sings a rough Cameronian muse:—

"Montrose did come and Athole both,  
And with them many more;  
And all the Highland Amorites  
That had been there before.  
The Lowdian Mallisha they  
Came with their coats of bleu;  
Five hundred men from London came,  
Clad in a reddish hue.  
When they were assembled one and all  
A full brigade were they,  
Lick to a pack of hellish hounds  
Roaring after their prey."

The story of that dreadful persecution is too well known to need a recital here. John Brown the carrier, shot at his own door, in presence of his wife and little ones, by the hand of Claverhouse himself; the five wanderers, shot at Glencairn as they lay hid in a cavern; the countryman, shot because he

knew nothing; and another, hanged because he knew and would not tell where his father lie concealed;—these, and a hundred other cases still more dark and terrible, are familiar to us, and their harrowing details are not to be forgotten. The severity of the persecution drove the sufferers to hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth—haunted dens, by the report of the neighbourhood, and believed to be so by the Covenanters themselves. "A very romantic scene," says Sir Walter Scott, "of rocks, thickets, and cascades, called Creehope Linn, on the estate of Mr. Menteath, of Closeburn, is said to have been the retreat of some of these enthusiasts, who judged it safer to face the apparitions by which the place was thought to be haunted, than to expose themselves to the rage of their mortal enemies."

The persecution was not of short duration; it lasted eight-and-twenty years, mystically indicated—so said the Scottish seers—by the eight-and-twenty gaps, or broken pieces, in the

of the Puritans: he escaped, on the journey to London, and vowed revenge. The news came that his wife was dead—dead of a broken heart, and the oath of vengeance was renewed. Charles II. was restored; persecution began in Scotland; and among those who persecuted most bitterly was a pale-faced, noble-looking soldier—the widowed man who had sworn revenge. While staying with his troop at a Scottish hamlet, at the base of one of the loftiest hills of Scotland, a highland woman brought news of a covenanting gathering; she betrayed it all for a Scotch pound and a glass or two of whiskey. There was to be a gathering, and a young girl was to be married to her plighted one, in simple presbyterian fashion, and in the open air. The troop was soon in motion, the spot soon gained; they halted for a moment, and looked down through the brushwood at the gathering in the valley below. It was a calm, beautiful picture. The pastor grave and solemn as one of Israel's leaders; the happy look of the young man as he



A COVENANTERS' WEDDING.

sword of Captain Paton, a stern Cameronian, and a man of great personal prowess, who had sealed his attachment to the Covenant by his death.

An incident which occurred during the persecution is represented in our engraving. And the story is this. A highland laird, in the days when the Puritans ruled, had sought the hand of a lady of good birth, and whose father had great influence with the presbyterian party. They loved each other; they were of the same age, the same rank in life; everything tending to promise a happy future—everything but one—they differed in their faith. The young man was a good Catholic and a true loyalist; the girl a Presbyterian—her family of the strictest sort. The consent of the girl's father was refused; but love was stronger than aught else; the girl was secretly married to her lover, and a month passed away. When the secret was discovered, the rage of the old man was terrible; he said little, but he acted promptly. Ere four-and-twenty hours had elapsed, the young man was betrayed into the hands

took the trembling hand of his betrothed, and the group gathered around; the old men and the little children—all seemed so calm and still, as if they felt the peace of God within their hearts as God's sunshine fell upon them. A moment, and the soldiers galloped forward—a shout from the hill—the discharge of a rifle—the shrieks of the women—the volley of fire-arms, and soldiers and Puritans were mixed up together. Most of the group had fled; those who remained were prisoners. Two were slain, and those two the newly-wedded pair; hand clasped in hand, they lay upon the grass—dead! And the end of the story is this:—that beautiful girl, whose eyes were closed in death, who had been hunted out of life by that vow of vengeance, was none other than the soldier's daughter—the child of his melancholy union, of whom, till that day, he had never heard. It is a melancholy episode in a terrible history, and gives to the wild beauty of the spot where it is said to have occurred an additional and pathetic interest.